

7. Nation and Diversity

Look at the picture and answer the questions that follow.



1. What does the picture signify?
2. Do you experience the theme reflected in the picture in your real life? If not, what may be the possible reason for this?

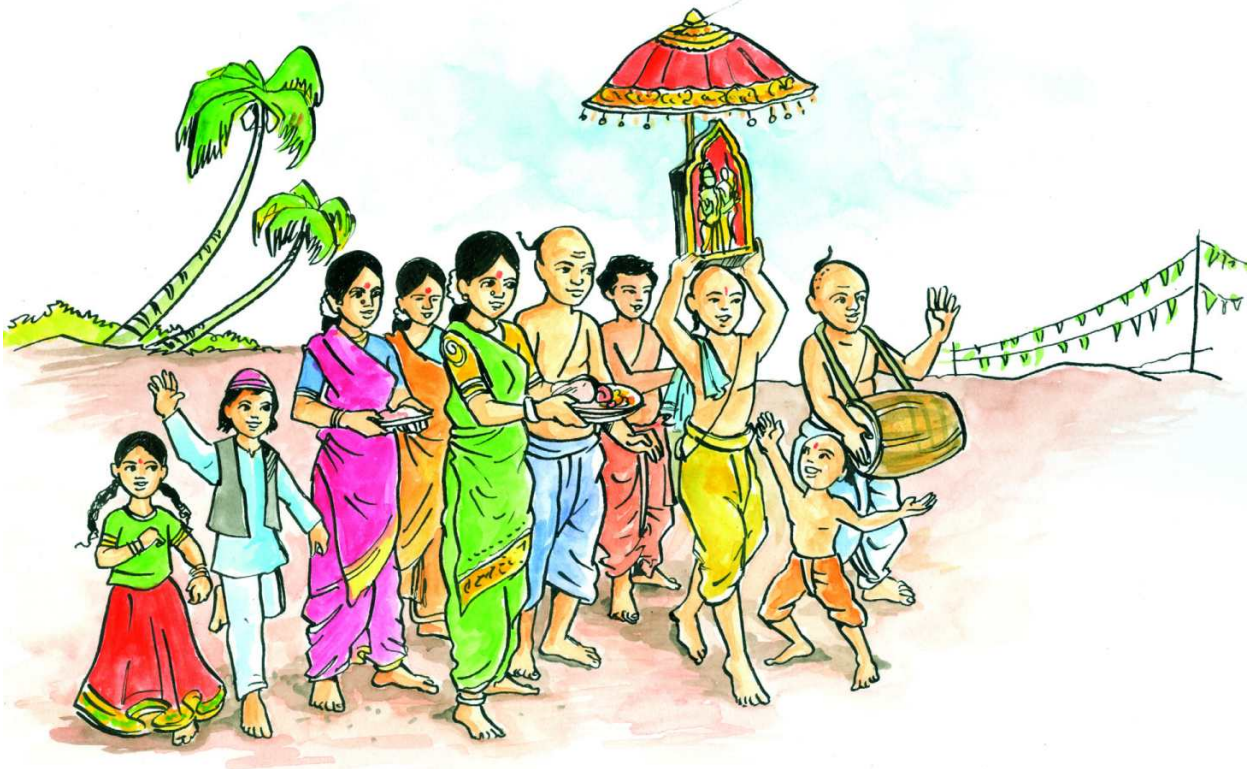
A Reading

Read the following extract from *Wings of Fire*, where the former President of India speaks of his childhood.

My Childhood

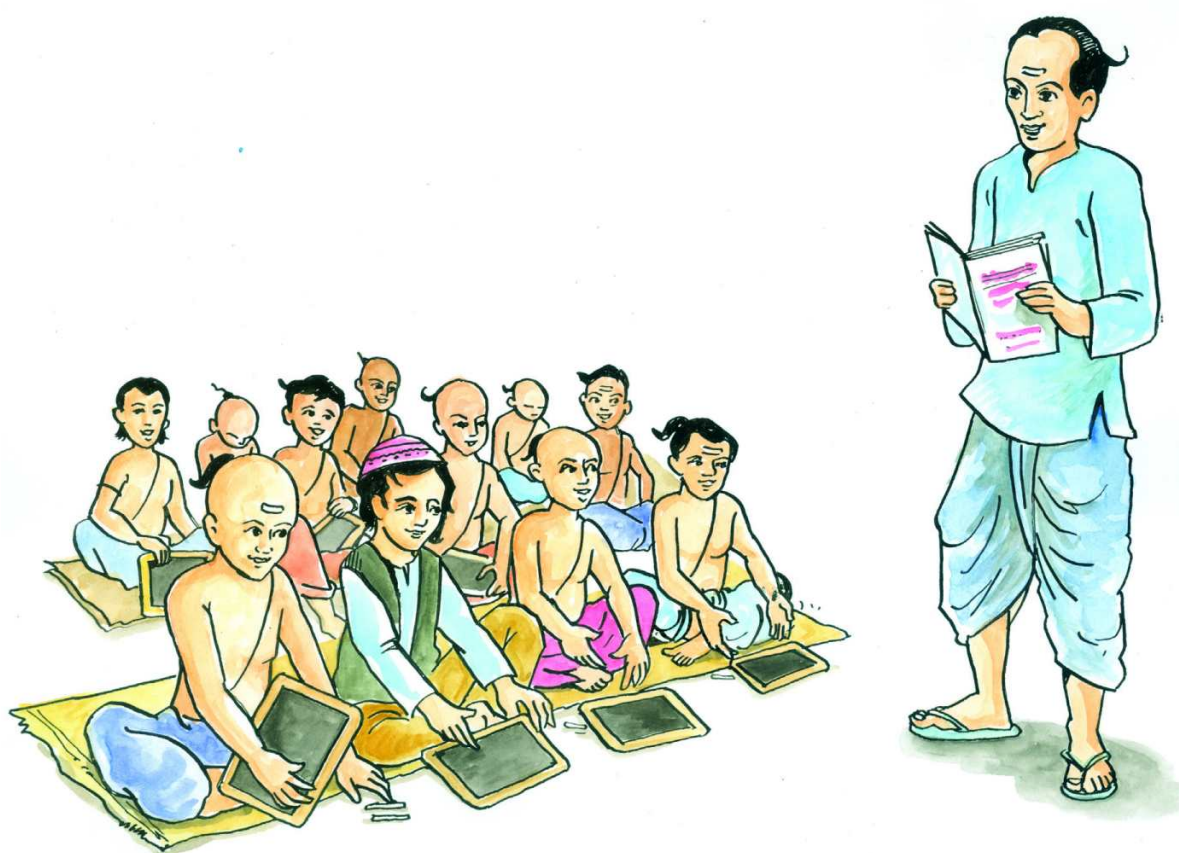
I was born into a middle - class Tamil family in the island town of Rameswaram in the erstwhile Madras State. My father, Jainulabdeen , had neither much formal education nor much wealth; despite these disadvantages, he possessed great innate wisdom and a true generosity of spirit. He had an ideal helpmate in my mother, Ashiamma. I do not recall the exact number of people she fed every day, but I am quite certain that far more outsiders ate with us than all the members of our own family put together.

I was one of the children - a short boy with rather undistinguished looks, born to tall and handsome parents. We lived in our ancestral house, which was built in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was a fairly large pucca house , made of limestone and brick, on the Mosque Street in Rameswaram. My austere father used to avoid all inessential comforts and luxuries. However , all necessities were provided for, in terms of food, medicine or clothes. In fact, I would say mine was a very secure childhood, both materially and emotionally.



The Second World War broke out in 1939, when I was eight years old. For reasons I have never been able to understand, a sudden demand for tamarind seeds erupted in the market. I used to collect the seeds and sell them to a provision shop on Mosque Street. A day's collection would fetch me the princely sum of one anna. My brother-in-law Jallaluddin would tell me stories about the War which I would later attempt to trace in the headlines in Dinamani. Our area, being isolated, was completely unaffected by the War. But soon India was forced to join the Allied Forces and something like a state of emergency was declared. The first casualty came in the form of the suspension of the train halt at Rameswaram station. The newspapers now had to be bundled and thrown out from the moving train on the Rameswaram Road between Rameswaram and Dhanuskodi. That forced my cousin Samsuddin, who distributed newspapers in Rameswaram, to look for a helping hand to catch the bundles and, as if naturally, I filled the slot. Samsuddin helped me earn my first wages. Half a century later, I can still feel the surge of pride in earning my own money for the first time.

Every child is born, with some inherited characteristics, into a specific socio-economic and emotional environment, and trained in certain ways by figures of authority. I inherited honesty and self-discipline from my father; from my mother, I inherited faith in goodness and deep kindness and so did my three brothers and sister. I had three close friends



in my childhood - Ramanadha Sastry, Aravindan and Sivaprakasan. All these boys were from orthodox Hindu Brahmin families. As children, none of us ever felt any difference amongst ourselves because of our religious differences and upbringing. In fact, Ramanadha Sastry was the son of Pakshi Lakshmana Sastry, the high priest of the Rameswaram temple. Later he took over the priesthood of the Rameswaram temple from his father; Aravindan went into the business of arranging transport for visiting pilgrims; and Sivaprakasan became a catering contractor for the Southern Railways.

During the annual Shri Sita Rama Kalyanam ceremony, our family used to arrange boats with a special platform for carrying idols of the Lord from the temple to the marriage site, situated in the middle of the pond called Rama Tirtha which was near our house. Events from the Ramayana and from the life of the Prophet were the bedtime stories my mother and grandmother would tell the children in our family.

One day when I was in the fifth standard at the Rameswaram Elementary School, a new teacher came to our class. I used to wear a cap which marked me as a Muslim, and I always sat in the front row next to Ramanadha sastry, who wore the sacred thread. The new teacher could not stomach a Hindu priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy. In accordance with our social ranking as the new teacher saw it, I was asked to go and sit on the back bench. I felt very sad, and so did Ramanadha Sastry. He looked utterly downcast as I shifted to my seat in the last row. The image of him weeping when I shifted to the last row left a lasting impression on me.

After school, we went home and told our respective parents about the incident. Lakshmana Sastry summoned the teacher, and in our presence, told the teacher that he should not spread the poison of social inequality and communal intolerance in the minds of innocent children. He bluntly asked the teacher to either apologize or quit the school and the island. Not only did the teacher regret his behaviour but the strong sense of conviction Lakshmana Sastry conveyed ultimately reformed this young teacher.

On the whole, the small society of Rameswaram was very rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups. However, my science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer, though an orthodox Brahmin with a very conservative wife, was something of a rebel. He did his best to break social barriers so that people from varying backgrounds could mingle easily. He used hours with me and would say, "Kalam, I want you to develop so that you are on par with the highly educated people of the big cities."



One day, he invited me to his home for a meal. His wife was horrified at the idea of a Muslim boy being invited to dine in her ritually pure kitchen. She refused to serve me in her kitchen. Sivasubramania Iyer was not perturbed, nor did he get angry with his wife, but instead, served me with his own hands and sat down beside me to eat his meal. His wife watched us from behind the kitchen door. I wondered whether she had observed any difference in the way I ate rice, drank water or cleaned the floor after the meal. When I was leaving his house, Sivasubramania Iyer invited me to join him for dinner again the next weekend. Observing my hesitation, he told not to get upset, saying, "Once you decide to change the system, such problems have to be confronted." When I visited his house the next week, Sivasubramania Iyer's wife took me inside her kitchen and served me food with her own hands.

Then the Second World War was over and India's freedom was imminent. "Indians will build their own India," declared Gandhiji. The whole country was filled with an unprecedented optimism. I asked my father for permission to leave Rameswaram and study at the district headquarters in Ramanathapuram.

He told me as if thinking aloud, "Abul! I know you have to go away to grow. Does the seagull not fly across the sun, alone and without a nest?." He quoted Khalil Gibran to my hesitant mother, "Your children are not your children. They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself. They come through you but not from you. You may give them your love but not your thoughts. For they have their own thoughts."

By A.P.J Abdul Kalam



About the author

Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, was born on 15th October 1931 at Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu. He was responsible for the evolution of ISRO's launch vehicle programme, particularly the PSLV configuration and for the development and operationalisation of AGNI and PRITHVI missiles and for building indigenous capability in critical technologies through networking of multiple institutions. In his literary pursuit, four of Dr. Kalam's books - "Wings of Fire", "India 2020 - A Vision for the New Millennium", "My Journey" and "Ignited Minds - Unleashing the power within India" have become household names in India and among the Indian nationals abroad. Dr. Kalam received honorary doctorates from 30 universities and institutions. He was awarded the coveted civilian awards - Padma Bhushan (1981) and Padma Vibhushan (1990) and the highest civilian award Bharat Ratna (1997). Dr. Kalam became the 11th President of India on 25th July 2002.

Glossary

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| erstwhile (<i>adj</i>) | : | former |
| undistinguished (<i>adj</i>) | : | not very interesting, successful or attractive |
| ancestral (<i>adj</i>) | : | of grandparents /forefathers |
| austere (<i>adj</i>) | : | simple and plain |
| orthodox (<i>adj</i>) | : | following closely the traditional beliefs and practices of a religion |
| summon (<i>v</i>) | : | to order somebody to come to you |
| conviction (<i>n</i>) | : | the act of finding somebody guilty of crime |
| segregation (<i>n</i>) | : | the policy / act of separating people |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| conservative (<i>adj</i>) | : | opposed to great/sudden social change |
| rituals (<i>n</i>) | : | a series of actions, specially as a part of religious ceremony |
| perturb (<i>v</i>) | : | to make worried/ anxious |
| confront (<i>v</i>) | : | to deal with a problem/ situation |
| optimism (<i>n</i>) | : | a feeling that good things will happen |

Comprehension

I. Answer the following questions.

1. What were the disadvantages faced by Kalam in his childhood?
2. " _____that forced Samsuddin to look for a helping hand." What does 'that' refer to?
3. " I filled the slot." What does the sentence mean?
4. If one wants to bring a change in the social system , what qualities should one possess?
5. Events from the Ramayana and from the life of the Prophet were the bedtime stories my mother and grandmother would tell the children in our family.

Choose the most appropriate meaning for the underlined phrase from the options given below.

- a) stories told by the bed side b) stories told on the bed c) stories told before going to sleep
6. " Your children are not your children" What does it mean ? Do you agree or disagree with the statement? Give reasons.
 7. As children, none of us ever felt any difference amongst ourselves because of our religious differences and upbringing.

Choose the most appropriate meaning for the underlined word from the options given below.

- a) education b) cared and trained c) food and shelter

8) Read the text and attribute the characteristics given in the box to the following women .

conservative , sociable, kind , secular, generous, simple, tolerant, adamant, orthodox

a) Subramania Iyer's wife b) Ashiamma

9. Identify the features of the text " My childhood".

a) What type of text is it? b) Reflections on the text c) Anecdotes in the text

Vocabulary

I. Fill in the blanks with suitable words often confused given in brackets.

1. Samsuddin helped me earn my first _____ (wages / income).
2. He received a proportion of his _____ (wages/ income) from selling tamarind seeds.
3. He is _____ (innocent / ignorant) about technology.
4. However he was found _____ (innocent/ ignorant)of any crime.
5. He lost all the wealth he had _____ (inherited / acquired) from his father because he _____ (acquired / inherited) bad habits.
6. People from different backgrounds could _____ (mix/ mingle)easily. _____ (mixed/mingled) group of people do not come to an agreement.
7. People in Rameshwaram were very _____ (rigid/ adamant) in terms of segregation of different social groups . Subramania Iyer _____ (rigidly/ adamantly) opposed it.
8. The car collided with a _____ (stationary/ stationery) vehicle when we were going to buy some _____ from the book stall.
9. She was _____ (envelop/ envelope) in a huge white towel.
10. We sent an airmail _____ (envelop/ envelope) abroad.
11. The floor was _____ (laid/ lied) with a newspaper.
12. He _____ (laid/ lied) many times.

II. Tick (✓) the appropriate meaning of the underlined word in each sentence below.

1. Kalam's father possessed great innate wisdom and a true generosity of spirit.
a) hospitality b) nobility c) kindness
2. A sudden demand for tamarind seeds erupted in the market.
a) started b) came up c) appeared suddenly
3. Our family arranged boats for carrying idols of the Lord from the temple to the marriage site, situated in the middle of the pond.
a) place b) ceremony c) feast
4. The new teacher could not stomach a Hindu priest's son sitting with a Muslim boy.
a) imagine b) permit c) tolerate
5. He looked utterly downcast as I shifted to my seat in the last row.
a) lonely b) sad c) disappointed
6. Sastry bluntly asked the teacher to either apologise or quit the school.
a) immediately b) angrily c) plainly
7. The small society of Rameswaram was very rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups.
a) strict b) firm c) strong
8. Sivasubramania Iyer was not perturbed, nor did he get angry with his wife.
a) disturbed b) disappointed c) pleased
9. India's freedom was imminent.
a) expected b) necessary c) certain

Grammar

I. Read the following paragraph and note the underlined words.

... On the whole, the small society of Rameswaram was very rigid in terms of the segregation of different social groups. However, my science teacher Sivasubramania Iyer, though an orthodox Brahmin with a very conservative wife, was something of a rebel. He did his best to break social barriers so that people from varying backgrounds could mingle easily.

Notice the underlined words or phrases in the above paragraph. They are called linkers or discourse markers. Noticing and understanding discourse markers help learners to understand the logical structure of what they read and listen to, the order of events and the attitude of the speaker or writer and what they refer to.

Think of the following.

- 1) What makes the writer use the linker 'on the whole' in the above paragraph? Give reasons.
- 2) What purpose does the linker 'however' serve in the paragraph?
- 3) What does the writer emphasize by using the linker 'though'?
- 4) Why did the writer use the linkers?

A. Here is a list of linkers. Some of them can be used synonymously. Refer to a dictionary and group them in the following table according to the function they perform in a sentence or discourse.

firstly, equally, besides, later, on the other hand,
 to sum up, on the contrary, furthermore, as a result, yet,
 thirdly, thus, still, suddenly, in the same way,
 nevertheless, therefore, at the same time, hence, all the same,
 subsequently, so, likewise, secondly, meanwhile,
 moreover, similarly, consequently, however,

| Sl. No | Function | Linkers |
|--------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| 1 | Indicating addition | |
| 2 | Contrasts | |
| 3 | Result | |
| 4 | Indicating sequence in time | |
| 5 | Indicating a parallel(similarity) | |
| 6 | Ordering points | |

B. Fill in the blanks with appropriate choices from brackets.

1. I don't want to go to a restaurant; _____ (*besides / as a result*), we can't afford it.
2. A career in IT field is lucrative; _____ (*similarly / at the same time*), it is stressful and it can even be harmful to one's health.
3. I understand your problems; _____ (*although / however*), I can't help you.
4. Transportation has developed a lot in India; _____ (*likewise / whereas*), the trade too has improved.
5. Some of the students scored low ranks in the exams; _____ (*so that / consequently*), the teacher arranged a series of remedial classes.

C. Complete the following paragraph by choosing the appropriate linking words.

next, for example, however, secondly, finally, thirdly

Linking words help us in many ways in writing. _____, they help us in presenting our ideas in a meaningful way. _____, they help us to introduce and develop the main idea of the paragraph. _____, they help us to illustrate and add supporting details. _____, they help us in moving from one idea to another by binding one sentence with another. _____, they help us to understand the ideas presented in the paragraph. _____, using too many linking words ruins the structure and coherence of the paragraph.

D. Join the following sentences using the linkers given in brackets.

1. There were freezing temperatures. They trekked for hours. (in spite of)
2. It's an interesting city. We're going to visit it again. (such ... that)
3. We booked a holiday. We had very little money. (although)
4. The tour guide was informative. We didn't need to read our guidebook. (so ... that)
5. He didn't like water. He booked a cruise. (In spite of the fact that)
6. Preachers preach many good things. Many of them do not practise what they preach. (however)
7. Jainulabdeen had no formal education and no wealth. (neither...nor)
8. The continental dimensions of the country account for the variations and diversities . There are several religious sects and beliefs.(besides).

II. Passive voice without agent.

Observe the following sentences taken from the text.

I was born.

Emergency was declared.

I was asked to go and sit on the back bench

You might have learnt in your previous classes about active and passive voice constructions. Though the above sentences are in the passive the, agent is not mentioned.

The agents are not mentioned in the following situations.

- When the agent is obvious
- When the agent is not known
- When it is not desirable to reveal the identity of the agent

Pick out from the text some more passive constructions without agents and give reasons why the agent is not mentioned.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

III. Edit the following paragraph. It has some errors in the areas like punctuation, spelling, tense, prepositions, articles.

he told me as if thinking aloud abul i know you have to go away to grow did the seagull not fly toward the son alone without a nest he quotes Khalil Gibran to my hesitant mother your children are not your children they are sons and daughters of lifes longing to itself they come to you but not from you you may give them love but not your thoughts for they have there own thoughts

Writing

I. Diary entry

Imagine that you were one of the students who witnessed the humiliation done to Kalam in the classroom. Reflect on the incident and write your emotions in your diary.

II. In the lesson , Kalam gave a brief description of his heritage.

Kalam says, " I don't recall the exact number of people she(his mother) fed every day , but I am quite certain that far more outsiders ate with us than all the members of our family put together."

This shows the heritage of hospitality and kindness.

Kalam says, "events from the Ramayana and from the life of the prophet were the bedtime stories my mother and grandmother would tell the children in our family".

This shows the heritage of secular spirit.

Read the entire text and identify the aspects related to the heritage of Kalam and his village.

III. Here is a letter that Moses wrote to his friend Ravi from the United States of America. Imagine yourself as Ravi and give a reply.

St.John's Enclave,
5-7/9,
St.Pauls Avenue,
Washington D.C.
June 27, 2013.

Dear Ravi,

I am really excited to write to you after a long time. Hope this letter finds you in a cheerful mood.

Here is some good news for you . That means , I would like to visit India sometime between October and November and stay there at least for a month and would like to visit your place.

Since I am coming to India for the first time , I would like to know about the people, their way of dressing, the food they take, the festivals they celebrate, the music and dance they like, etc. In fact, I have read about Indian culture through books and internet. But I would like to have some authentic information from you.

Hope I can hear from you soon.

Convey my greetings to your family.

Yours lovingly,
Moses Bridge

To
Ravi.K,
S/o Bose,
10-92, Narayanaguda,
Hyderabad,
India - 500029.

Listening

Listen to an extract from the speech by A.P.J Abdul Kalam at IIT Hyderabad on 27th September 2011.

I. Now answer the following questions.

1. Who were the three great minds with whom the speaker worked?
2. What dreams did Kalam talk about?
3. India realised its first vision of freedom in 1857. (True / False)
4. We must be strong not only as _____ but also as _____
5. Who is the father of nuclear material?

Oral Activity

I. Role play

Read the episode of ill-treatment meted out to Kalam in paragraphs 6 and 7. Understand the characters involved in the episode. Take the roles of the new teacher, Kalam, Ramanadha Shastry, Jainulabdeen and Lakshmana Sastry. Picturize the episode in your mind and create appropriate dialogues and role play it.

II. Group discussion

Conduct a group discussion on how 'national festivals' promote national integrity. You may use the following points for discussion.

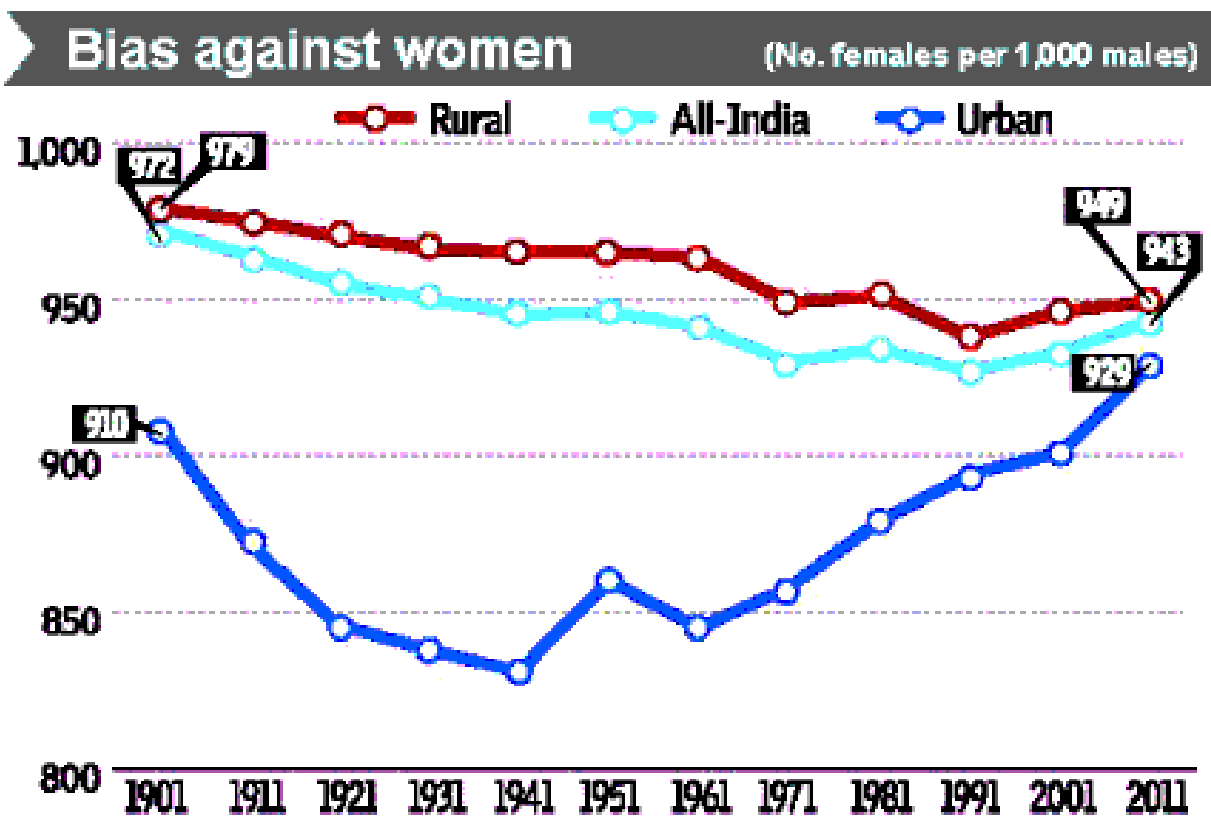
- a) kind of festival
- b) nature of celebration
- c) secular aspect of celebration

Points to remember

- Each group will have a moderator to monitor / regulate the discussion.
- Each member of a group should take his/her turn and speak clearly, briefly and pin-pointedly and use polite language.
- While speaking make eye contact with others.
- Give time to the others and listen to them.
- If a member wants to say or add a point, he/she has to raise his/ her hand and politely seek permission of the moderator.
- The moderator has to connect the ideas expressed by the members and finally sum up.

Study Skills

The following graph shows the female-male sex ratio in rural and urban areas comparing with the national average. Read the following graph and write a paragraph comparing the female-male sex ratio in rural and urban areas in India comparing with the national average. Comment on the reasons and its consequences



Source: National Sample Survey

B Reading

A Plea for India

We, Indians, are proud to be a strong nation,
our roots, we declare, cannot be shaken.

Then why these fights,
which leave us in poor plight?

Irrespective of our region,
forget the castes,
which makes us lose our charm.

Let's ignore the selfish call of each region,
and listen for once to the call of the nation.

Why do we spend our time bickering
when so many tasks need finishing?

Don't we have better things to do
than indulge in creating problems anew?

Is all this violence needed
with the people being cheated?

Who will return this only son
whom she loves a ton?

Who will bring back his brother
whose ashes he is still to gather?

Where has all the love gone
which resided in the heart of all?

There is no reason to be proud,
and be on high cloud.

We have to go a long way,
we have to think seriously,
else we end up miserably.

Then let our minds throw out the rot,
and devote our time to pious thoughts.

Let us control the riots,
which leave us with no choice,
but to hang our heads in shame,
and say we have miserably failed.

We have the power to win,
so why not end this din?

Let us unite,
and fight against those who incite.

Let us not be misled,
by those who want to see us dead.

We are a strong united nation,
all we need is a bit of dedication.

Glossary

- plight (*n*) : a difficult or sad situation
- bicker (*v*) : argue about things that are not important
- pious (*adj*) : showing a deep respect for God and religion
- din (*n*) : a loud / unpleasant noise that lasts for a long time
- incite (*v*) : encourage somebody to be violent by making angry

Comprehension

1. What do fights put us in?
2. Why does the poet use the expressions ‘proud to be a strong nation’ and ‘hang heads in shame’ at the same time?
3. Who are cheats? Who are being cheated?
4. What are the tasks to be finished according to the poet?
5. What is the central idea of the poem?

C Reading

Unity in Diversity in India

India, a country of many ethnic groups, is a land of myriad languages, a veritable babel of tongues and numerous modes of apparel. For the most part, the continental dimensions of the country account for these variations and diversities. Besides, there are several religions, sects and beliefs. But there are certain common links and uniting bonds that people have sought to develop in order to achieve the eminently desirable goal of unity amidst diversity.

It is true that superficial observers are likely to be bewildered by the astonishing variety of Indian life. They fail to discover the one in many, the individual, in the aggregate; the simple in the composite. With them the whole is lost in its parts. What is needed is the superior interpretation, synthesis of the power of the mind that can give rise to a vision of the whole.



A keen penetrating insight will not fail to recognise the fundamental unity beneath the manifold variety in India. The diversity itself, far from being a damaging cause of disunity and weakness, is a fertile source of strength and wealth. Sir Herbert Risely has rightly observed: "Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social types, languages, customs and religions which strike the observer in India, there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin."

From his long and first-hand experience in India, Vincent A. Smith says that the civilisation of India "has many features which differentiate it from that of the other regions